

They have kind of that Repugnant snap to them?

Yeah. And I mean, Repugnant were very much inspired by Sadistic Intent actually. So, it's that kind of thing.

And then, what are a few active bands from Sweden that you'd recommend that do not include: Marduk, Funeral Mist, Onskapt, Repugnant, In Solitude, Ghost, Degial.

I wouldn't put Onskapt in there but...

No? You don't like them?

I did, but...

What, are they jerks?

They are very much jerks. But I mean... I think you mentioned them all. There are none. Except Nifilheim. Were they on there?

No, but there is no secret about Nifilheim. That's a given.

Well those bands you mentioned really stand for something in Sweden. For me especially In Solitude and Ghost and Degial (Erik added: "No Future" to this list a few days later. Also from Upsala, they're made up of 2 or 3 members of In Solitude). And, I think a lot of bands in Sweden feel that and they want to do something similar, but they only go half way. So, there's no need to mention them until they get a bit better.

Fair enough. Well, this is the last one I've got, and it could be taken several ways, but either way: how do you think Watain, which is obviously a huge chunk of your life, would have been different, had you been born with brown skin?

Well... we sure would have a much easier time getting rid of the nazi rumors, but... yeah, that's a tough one. I would really love to know how it would have been, and sometimes... well, I remember an interview I saw when I was pretty young with Max Cavalera from Sepultura and he was saying something like, if you have tattoos and long hair in Brazil, it means the same as being a black guy in the south of the USA in the 1920's, and I remember being like, yeah right. With that being said, I think I've always felt a bit uncomfortable with the background... like my childhood background was actually very, easy and very liberal. My parents still live together, I have a good relation to them. They've always been very encouraging of whatever quest I've been on, strange as it may seem, but they really have, and that's always been a bit of an itch in a way. One having been born black and being of a concrete minority; which I still consider myself part of in the way of life that I lead, but not as obvious, you know? But yeah. I think it would have done a lot of good things. I mean we've got one guy from Italy and one from Chile in the band and that has been very empowering. It's like spices put into an already spicy mixture. I think we would have been even stronger now, because, one thing is sure and that is that we would have still done the same thing.

Selim Lemouchi, of the Devil's Blood

(also live lead guitar for Watain in N. America 2010 and 2012)
Conducted in Montreal on May 9th, 2012

Forward: By the time this likely sees print, I will have been sitting on both of these interviews for quite some time and Selim will probably have been dead for going on a year, maybe more. I decided to leave the intro of this first interview exactly as I wrote it in 2012. And for the second interview, it appears by itself.

Selim is a hilarious fucker. Throughout the week of following this tour around the northeast and the three Canada dates, I would often hear my name yelled from some dark corner or from where ever, and there was no mistaking who it was who'd wanted to say what's up? "Waters of Ain." has become one of those songs which I've come to a point with where I can't even conceive the idea of what life must have felt like prior to having heard it. Though Selim has said, it isn't his song, he had a huge part in it, and of the nine times which I've now (as I write this) seen it performed live, it was with him on lead. Despite the inevitable fact that I am indeed a "fan" of what this fellow does, both in the Devil's Blood and with Watain, I enjoyed shooting the shit with him throughout the week.

Like with Erik, I almost didn't want to actually record this interview. I'd prefer to have just enjoyed the talk like folks would have done in the old days upon meeting and discussing ideas and goals and visions. I think that when you add the idea of so-called "journalism" into the interactions with folks who you feel like are either becoming good friends, or with others that already are, it creates something else which is mildly awkward: a "something" which I don't have a word for, but whatever it is I think it is lame. OWEN (the editor) says here in red ink: FIND THE WORD!!! AWKWARDNESS? INEQUALITY? JUDGEMENT? Very much a "something" quite akin to this bizarre day and age we are in. I think others give less of a shit about that "something" than I do, and I guess that's a good thing. I have to remind myself quite often that Bogus Rendition is not "Vice Magazine," or "Juxtaposed," or "Adbusters" or any of those other cesspools which thrive off of artsy-hipster-fuckballs. It really is still for me and those I chose to share it with. Well, and the few who decide they actually want to buy a copy.

Anyways...

I've always felt that I have a pretty shitty way with words. Ask any of the unlucky ladies I've spent a serious amount of time with over the years (and I mean, just try and see if you can get through these next two paragraphs in one shot, I dare you). Some people are shocked and think I'm full of shit when I say that, especially those who've for whatever reason enjoyed reading back issues of the lousy publication you hold in your hands. Say what you will (cause this'll sound really cheesy), but the reason I decided to start playing guitar, apart from that it is easier to play than those damn mandolins, is that I don't know how else to express the feelings in my head because, for a lot of it, words don't cut it. And that is where for me, the music becomes a tool to channel other shit which in fact can't have words confining it. Granted, stringed instruments are still new things for me, and I suck at guitar, but that's not the point. The point I think has already been made, and I know the same shit I'm talking about has been getting said over and over for hundreds of years. I will never be Kerry King or Joe Satriani, and I couldn't give a flying fuck. The shit coming out of that guitar is another way of speaking. I think that one of the primary things which is wrong with not only rock based music, not only music in general, but just about 95% of any type of creativity, is that those "creating" whatever it is that is being "created," have either forgotten or never knew of it in the first place: the idea of speaking in ways that don't involve diarrhea of the mouth. Thus said "art" is not about expression: it is about recognition.

There are, however, occasional examples of "art." (I hate that fucking word) such as the guitar playing from the son of a bitch who is about to be interviewed here, which I feel breaks through all that other malarky. Selim's guitar playing is a fine example of expressing things which simply can't be put into these ditty little things called "words." I could write some stupid review and cite his obvious influences and everything else, but I think it'd be missing the point. What was cool for me most of all with this one, was to find yet another (though the count is still low) who's got a lot of the same ethics as I do concerning "creative drive" (or whatever dumb name you want to put on it), but unlike me, is not some sucky beginner. And yet, though an excellent "player," it was far different than watching some veteran who's more interested in music theory than playing music that is (at least for me) actually worth two shits. I guess here is where one could make some reference about "music being kinda like life," or something: The Satanic or religious aspects of both bands aside (though as an outsider to it, it is something I have come to respect this cast of characters for), it is more so the ethics used to approach the music, and the similarities to going about various roads in life: ways of enjoying the good things for what they are and ways of dealing with the bullshit along the way.

I was warned by two or three folks a little before this interview, that Selim was "pretty fucked up," on all sorts of "shit," and it'd likely not be a good time for conducting such a thing, but within ten minutes of hearing that, I heard my name yelled from across the street. He said he was feeling it and was feeling good. So here is what was said. This one is a bit more of a traditional band interview I guess, since I also pulled the questions out of my ass pretty quick. But, this brother did a fine job with having all sorts of shit to say and I think it came out as one of the best "band interviews" I've ever read.

Again, there were little bits of "chatter" which have been omitted from this one. For the sake of clarity. Otherwise, what follows is what was.

Here we go...

So, tell me more about the story with the Urfaust guys hearing the demo and telling you that you had to put a full band together... or else...

Well it's a great convergence of events in a strange way because, I, had made the demos in, I think, it was the start of 2007, and... I put those online on like a myspace thing and I didn't really give it any second thoughts. And after maybe half a year, I checked the profile and it was completely filled with emails. People being like, "we wanna release it," "we wanna do this," or "we wanna book you for a show..." and we didn't even have a band. At that point, it was just me and my sister-

You played all the parts?

Yeah, everything. I did all the guitars, the bass. I programed the drums, some synths here and there if I could... and I was just like, "yeah well, okay." I really didn't feel any ambition to bring it to a recording level or

a performing level. And then Watain had put out "Sworn to the Dark," and... well, "Casus Luciferi" had already destroyed me, and then that one was like... even more. And... I went to this concert that they did in a venue that was called, "The Goldfish Hall..." or well, that's what the translation is. And, it was like a punk rock venue where they don't give a shit about anything and you can do just about anything there. It was good. But, that Watain concert turned out to be the last one that they ever did there, ever. That was when the people from the city came and they had the stench and the blood cannons and everything, and it was bad. I mean, it was fucking great, but, it was really bad. So, I was there watching Impiety, who was the support, waiting for Watain to start and having a beer and there were these two guys standing next to me, whom I'd never seen before, and... this one guy just grabs me by the hair and says, "are you the guy from the Devil's Blood?" And I said "yeah. How the fuck do you know about Devil's Blood?" And he's like, "oh, I've heard the demo, I've downloaded it, I've printed it on CD's and given it to friends. I think it's really fucking good." And I'm like, "well okay. You owe me a hundred dollars" (laughs). So we got talking a bit and drinking a bit and then he pulls over this over guy who turns out to be Willem, the singer of Urfaust, and they're talking to me, and we're talking about music and, well, not so much but, why we feel the need to do the things that we do. What is it you're trying to tell me? And I was like, I dunno. These strange experiences, these strange dreams, the things I've gone through in life... they've led me to this. They've led me to make these songs. And, I've got more songs, but, I don't think anyone is really interested, so, I'm not really going to try and bother trying to go through that whole rock 'n roll thing again with, trying to get a label and trying to get stuff recorded and trying to get a line-up with people who aren't complete fucking idiots... and then he just looked at me and said, "well you know, you've got these two choices: either you're going to do this. Or, I'm going to come down to Eindhoven and kick the living shit out of you because it is too good. You have to do something with it." And, this guy never makes a threat that is hollow. And I was like, "you're serious." and he said, "I'm fucking serious." So I said, "well, then you guys have to come and play in my band. Cause like, if you want me to do this, then take some responsibility and help me do it." And they did. We had a bunch of rehearsals with the both of them. Plus a drummer who was a friend of mine. Willem, the guitar player from Urfaust also on guitar. The drummer from Urfaust on bass... and that went on for a couple months of rehearsals, and... you know, we were enjoying the shit out of it. And then, we got the offer for the Roadburn Festival. The guy who does it, who's a good friend I've known for a long time... he called me and said, "I've heard this demo, I like it. What do you think about doing your first... 'ritual,' at the Roadburn Festival?" And I was like, "yeah, but we don't want to play live, I mean, it wouldn't work, I have to find the people, blah blah blah." And... I brought it back to my sister and she was like, "but fuck. Why not? Try not to think of a reason not to do it, because you're good at thinking of reasons not to do stuff. It could be a good experience. And if it doesn't work then, well, fuck it. It's just this one thing that we could do." So I told them, and that was about the time that Willem, the guitar player from Urfaust pulled out because, job, children, you know. Too much to do, and... like I told you yesterday, he's a bit of a recluse and he doesn't really appreciate being in a rehearsal room with five other people all the time, and having to practice a lot. Some of the parts were quite intricate already and I had the thought that if, well, the moment that we take this to a stage then we'd have to be, well, somewhat perfect at it. So, he quit, but Jim stayed on with us for a while. We recorded the 7", which was two songs; the "Graveyard Shuffle" and "Waxing Moon Over Babylon," with him. Then we went and did the Roadburn, and, played a really bad show-

This was 2008?

Yeah. It wasn't bad in the sense that we didn't know what we were doing, but we were just unexperienced and just, well, we were trying something but not really pulling it off yet... But, at the time, this hunger had emerged. And I

really wanted to, well... I was like, what the fuck else am I doing with my life, you know? I'm sitting at home, being bored, being depressed all the time. Trying to figure out what all this stuff that I hear in my head means, trying to translate it into music, and... that's good enough for some people maybe, but I have to express it in some sort of release and maybe a live thing would be good. So, after the Roadburn thing, we got ourselves a different line-up and recorded the "Come Reap" EP, which was five songs with a Rocky Erikson cover on it... and then Jim said, "you guys are too good for me already... I don't know how to play this shit, I'm gonna go back to Urfaust, I'm gonna do that, you guys are gonna do this, and everything will be fine. And it was, more or less. I mean, we've had one major line-up change

since then, but otherwise it's always stayed the same. It's always been me and my sister. We've got two really good guitar players and a really good drummer, and they help us to do what we need to do. And, that's basically where we are now. The thing that people still don't seem to get about the Devil's Blood, as opposed to a lot of other bands, is that a lot of other bands, when they start, they're like, "if we do this kind of style, or if we play this kind of stuff, then we can get gigs and we can make a record and from there on it will develop." But for us it was like, "we know exactly what we want to do, musically," or at least I did, but I had no desire to do it live, per se. But, when a good offer comes around, and it seems like something that you might actually enjoy doing and it seems to make sense out of a spiritual perspective to do, than you're just a fucking idiot if you say no. I mean, a good opportunity is a good opportunity. And, we took it like in baby steps... with everything we do. We got four or five offers to tour America before this one. And looked at it and would say, "yeah but we hate that band, the money sucks. It's gonna cost us way too much effort and way too much energy to do it in a proper way and everybody is gonna be pissed off for a month... no. fuck it" And in the same sense, in Europe, we're in Eindhoven in Holland. It's a town in the south. And if a guy in Leipzig Germany wants to put up a concert, we'd do two or three, more or less in the same region for the weekend or whatever, and then we'd go home again. And then the next weekend we'd go to Athens and the next London or Helsinki. And the mentality is like, "show us what you've got. Show us what you can offer us. And if we think it's okay then we'll do it. And by the same reasoning, that's how we ended up here in Montreal today. And we haven't really changed that. We still work in Europe with an underground record label, who is not so much interested in selling a million records, but his attitude is more like, "if we sell 2000 records, or 20,000 or whatever, then I want 20,000 happy customers. So, whatever you need to do to make this record, whatever it has to be, I'll go to the bank, I'll beg, I'll fall on my knees, I'll get you the cash and do it." Which is good, because I have a little rule, which is that the Devil's Blood doesn't pay for anything. I have to be in a working relationship with a label that says, "you wanna record? Here's your budget. Do whatever you want." I understand that they want to re-coop at the end. I mean, we're not earning anything. He gets all the money we're making right

now because he has to pay for this last album, which was, I dunno. All in all it might have cost like, 80,000 Euros to make, which I think is like a hundred thousand in US equivalent. So, that's a lot of money. Especially for an underground label. You know, for most of the records he's done, the recording budgets were like a thousand, max. But, we went into a professional studio for almost two months, so, it's a different kind of a thing. But he's so dedicated and so hungry, that he's just like, "yeah. I'll figure it out. I don't know how, but I'll figure it out." And to surround yourself with people like that, like in the first part, it was the Urfaust guys who are like, "we like so much what you are doing, that we think it should be heard." And the record label has the same attitude, and that kind of brought us around. We were like, "okay. Well, these are people we respect. These are people we admire..." And the same goes for Erik because he was one of the people who was like, "come to Sweden. Do it. We'll do a gig there." Johan, the stage manager from Watain's last US tour. He was the guy that organized our first time in Stockholm. Not because he thought he was gonna make any money, but because he was like, "I want to be able to know that I've done this." And that's a really good feeling, and we're going to try to keep that aesthetic,

that way of working for as long as we can. And if there ever comes a point where we feel like we are the victim of like... a business plan, that's when I quit. That's where it stops for me. Business is something that, managers, and record execs and A+R managers... that is what they should be worried about. The only thing I want to hear from them is, "I love what you're doing. You're doing a good thing, keep doing exactly what you're doing." I don't wanna hear, "well maybe we should change the order of the songs," or, "maybe we should do this, or maybe put a big sticker on the front because we can't read the logo," or whatever. That stuff is all beyond me as a person. Those are compromises that I don't feel comfortable in making. And there is already a lot of compromise that you have to make. Just working with other people in itself, is a compromise. And they're not necessarily bad ones, but, you want to steer clear of the bad ones. And you have to keep an open mind like... well, I don't know if this works in English, but in Holland we have this saying which is "if someone promises you a golden mountain, then there is probably a catch somewhere." Nobody gives away, anything in this world. There's no such thing as a free lunch. Everything has to be done for a reason. So, if I can figure out what their reasons are to do it, and they are slightly coinciding with mine... and if there is a little compromise to be made in a certain aspect, for example; we never did any band photos or anything like that, because I didn't like that. But, for this last one, the record label came to me and said, "you know, I've invested a lot in this. A shit-load of money, and I'm kind of afraid that I'm not going to be able to earn any of it back. And all the magazine, the big ones at least, are asking for promotional shots. I know you hate it, but, if I give you a budget and a good photographer, and complete control in what it is going to be like... would you consider it?" So like, yeah. You know... That's a compromise you make for a friend. I can do that. And I guess this way of thinking and this way of working is, whatever it is, is what made the Devil's Blood what it is today. For some people I've met on the road... here in America or in Europe, it means a lot. It means the world and, for us it obviously does as well. So, in the end, it's been a victorious ride.

I never even heard of you guys until through Erik and that little blurb at the end of the last issue of Slayer...

Yeah! Yeah. *The book.* I've been in contact with him for a little while and... well. That was a good moment. And it's people like that guy who did Slayer Mag, who never cared about trends or what is going on in the scene, or whatever. He made his own scene. He picked out bands and was like, "this to me is the essence of Satan. This to me is power. This to me is righteous fury," and that's what I like. Bands like Nephilim and like Mayhem and like Watain... And someone like that suggests the if you appreciate this, then you should listen to that. And at one point or another, it's not about music, because, we don't make the same music. And if you look at it from a mathematical point of view, I mean, the Devil's Blood and Watain are not even close. But, I mean...

The feel is the same. You feel it in a similar sense...

Yeah! And I mean, I'm not to sure where, because there have been a lot of drunk nights on this tour, but it was one of the Watain guys, at some point, there was some guy being all like, "Oh Watain!" and he looks at me and was like, "oh you're the guitar player from Watain and Devil's Blood. I really love Watain, but not too sure about Devil's Blood." And, I don't care, I didn't have anything to say to it. But one of the Watain guys said, "why not? It's exactly the same." And he was like... (makes a confused sort of face) and he walked away. And a lot of people don't get that connection in that it really is not about the music. The music is something we do and perfect because that's the way we express. It's the only way we know to express, in the way that a painter only knows how to paint, and how an axe murderer only knows how to... chop. It's the way that the energies speak through us, and that is something that we have to deal with and to take pride in and

something we have to perfect to the utmost, but at the end of the day... Watain, Devil's Blood... In Solitude. The music itself is just the music. It is the other stuff that is important.

Well, I guess cause it was cool talking about it last night, what are some of the good and bad things about this tour and some of the good and bad things from the last Watain tour, and some of the comparisons?

Well, like I was saying last night, the very good thing about this tour is that there is a collection of bands, and you know, for me especially, it's In Solitude and Watain, and to a certain degree I have come to respect Behemoth as well; for the people they are, for the courtesies that they've given us... and the fact that I do know that what this band is about is actually what they truly believe in. It may not be my view on things, but, that's not really... that's not the point, at all. I have no judgement for people who follow their heart... whatever they do. It's a very rare thing for people to be speaking their mind, without compromising. And, that much I certainly respect, and also the professionalism of the whole thing. So the good thing about this tour has been, these four bands, banding together in a way, making sure that everyone gets what they deserve, ah... whilst at the same time maintaining a completely perfect and professional set for each of the bands themselves. So, there is a little bit of caring for others, but, when we go on, there is no other band in the universe than us. And that goes for all three opening bands. We have no false humilities or anything like that. That's the good thing about this tour. The good thing about the last tour,

for me, and that's especially for me I guess, was the fact that I was asked to do it and, I was extremely honored to do it, and I felt, in a way bad to do it as well because Set is a very good friend of mine and I... there is no better thing than Watain with Set on guitar. It reaches a different level of spirituality then because he is... he is truly the child of his father. So that was, you know... big shoes to fill in a way... but I never tried to fill them, I try to bring my own shoes and I try to do it in my own way, which, everyone respected and everyone understood. But, the good thing about that tour was that I had no, well almost no responsibilities. You know, I was there as a guitar player, as a spiritual addition to the rituals. But, there was a tour manager taking care of all the small stuff, there was band members making decisions about what we should play and how we should play it, when we should play it... and I was just there to perform and exude, and... that gave me a lot of freedom. It gave me a lot of freedom to stand back and look at whatever was going on around me. Sometimes you meet interesting people... sometimes you just be an obnoxious cunt and... you know live... which is an important thing. But on this tour I have a little bit more work to do because I have to make sure that not only am I in prime form when I go on with Devil's Blood, which is my responsibility because it's my thing, so, I have to make sure everything there goes a little bit smoothly... and then at the same time I have to do the same thing with Watain to, to make sure that I can do that to the utmost as well. So it's a little bit more of hard work for me... but then again, I've never shied away from a good honest days work, and... especially if it brings me to where I am now.

That actually leads into this one, which you've sort of just answered in a way. But, I haven't seen Watain with Set, cause, you know, he can't come over here. I mean, he got in for the Angel Corpse tour, but I missed it. So, Watain as a five piece to me has always been with you on lead and the idea of going over to the other side (as in Europe) and seeing them with him seems kinda strange to me. I mean, does he do leads or do him and Pelle switch or how does that all go?

Well, it's shared. I mean, me and Pelle swap leads as well but I do most of the solos. But over there, Set is the one doing most of the melodies and the solos. He's a tremendously talented musician as well... For me, I mean I'm

probably at this point too close to it to put it into words that would make sense for other people, but for um... having witnessed Watain as the way that it should be, with those five people, it's... well, I dunno. It's hard to describe. It's like a vortex of flame and fire and passion... hatred, love. All those things, and Set being who he is and being the kind of spiritual initiate that he is, in his traditions, he brings a certain sense of... zealotry to the proceedings that... you know, when I am watching them, and I've watched them many times... it always burns me up, it hurts, it's like; flagellation with a barbed wire whip... which Watain is always, or should be at least. And I can, or, I've never witnessed myself of course, doing his parts... but I can only hope, that I can reach a certain level of what I know he is capable of. And like I said earlier, the music itself is not so much the point; it's much more the channeling that goes on through the music. When they did the 13th year anniversary show, they played "Waters of Ain." But, because there was a lot of stretched issues surrounding those dates and, the Devil's Blood was supposed to be there as well, and I didn't have time to rehearse with them and blah blah blah... we decided that I wasn't going to play "Waters of Ain" with them, so I was not going to do the guitar solo... um... so Set did it, and... he didn't play the same notes as I did. But every note that he played was a revelation of itself. It was something new, something that he himself had, taken charge of. And... when they started it, I was... I became enraged... beyond anything that I've ever felt. It was this sense of, "why am I not on stage? Why the fuck am I not doing it?" And I grabbed Johan (Watain's stage manager) and screamed in his face, "why the fuck didn't they ask me? WHY?" And he was just like, "relax... a little bit. I understand but..." And I went nuts. It was like this sense of fire shooting out of my ears and out of my nose and... but then they finished the song and I was crying... like a baby. Looking at these five people, celebrating something that they have built up, for a certain amount of time. And you know, Set and Alvaro haven't been with the band for 13 years, but in the 8 or 9 years that they have been connected to it, this is a family, this is a cult, this is a gang. It is much more than just a bunch of musicians doing their shit. And, whether I am playing it or not, or whether Set's playing it or if Erik's gonna play it on the last few dates of the tour... I hope at least, that I can get him to do it... but, it doesn't matter. The people who are doing it, don't matter. It's much more than that. It's this... transformation of essence, from the mundane, from the flesh... into the spiritual, into the divine. That is the only thing that counts, and I think what they have proven, time and time again, is that... well, if you wanna put it into a stylistic way: Watain is the only black metal band in the world right now, that I know. And I've listening to this shit since I was 11 in like, '91 so it's, it's... you have "De Mystrious Dom Satanus," and then you have Watain... That's about it for me.

What are three bands that you're obsessed with right now that are not from Sweden?

Well, the band that completely fucked me up last year, is a band from France. From Paris, called Diapsiquir (spells it). It's... well, we recorded our album in 2011 and released it in 2011. And of course when you make a new record and you're proud of it you're always like, "it's the best fucking record of the year," you know? And then they released their album at the end of the year and I heard it... and I fell apart. Like... musically, spiritually... conceptually even. It's truly one of the most, all encompassing works of art that I've heard in a very very long time. And I've listened to that album daily for the last 5 or 6 months. It's not for the faint of heart. It's in French, so, a lot of people won't get it, but if they buy the record and if they know some French or know someone who does or if they use google-translator or whatever and try to figure it out a little bit... it's one of the most depraved and beautiful things that I've ever heard. So I would really suggest for people to pick that up. And then... well it's gonna sound really cheesy, but I've been listening to "The Fifth Dimension" from the Birds, a lot. The one with "Eight Miles High"... and... the last Roky Erikson album that he did, with Okkervil River ("True Love Cast Out All Evil"). I mean, I've seen Roky Erikson perform two times now and turned into a baby. I've had to crawl up into my sister's arms and just cry... which is something that may be a bit difficult for "metal" people to swallow, but... I mean, I went to see a Lenard Cohen concert a few years ago in Holland... which was the best thing I've ever seen live ever, period. They released a DVD of that, one of the shows that they did on that tour, "Live in London," it's called. It's like, one and a half hours of, utter brilliance. So if anyone is into, beautiful stuff that reaches you on a spiritual, emotional... and sometimes maybe even ironical humoristic level, then check that out. "Live in London." Absolutely brilliant.

Afterword:

For whatever it's worth, two nights later in Worcester, as the Devil's Blood performed "Voodoo Dust," from the Come Reap EP, out of the blue I started bawling my eyes out.

Yep... no kidding... I mean... (silence for a bit) I ask because I can't even imagine Watain anymore before "Waters of Ain," you know?

Well, I mean, Erik always keeps a very close hand on the things that he is contemplating. And at that, everyone in the band. They all have tremendously brilliant musical ideas. I was just in the bus with Alvaro, playing some stuff that blew my mind. And Håkan the drummer, when he picks up a guitar and he starts coming up with shit, you're like, "this is not you. I know you. This is more," you know? And for me it's the same thing, I mean... I can play the guitar and just do some shit. And I can do some pretty good shit if I want to. But the stuff that I record and the stuff that people might remember... that wasn't done by me. It wasn't. That's just the long and short of it.



Selim interview 2

via email shortly after the Devil's Blood ended in early 2013

You've said in the past that when the band ended, you would like to travel, and not the way one travels while touring. So, where are the 1st three places that are on your mind, and what draws you to those places?

For a man who is never completely sure about where he's headed this is a surprisingly difficult question to answer. Travel is often spontaneous and ad hoc when it comes to holidays or rather, travel for the sake of travel, and is quite rare for me. Most of my travel plans have always involved touring and then you just go where they tell you. Having said that I would love to return to New Orleans, a place of culture and magic that I found to be enthralling. South-East Asia always held a lot of attraction to me although I'd be hard pressed to say why. It probably is the alien quality it has in terms of culture for me as a westerner. A quality which I gather is a fading thing as globalisation and conglomeration seem unstoppable. Third on my list would be South/Middle America. Because of drugs and women if I were to feel like an animal and also for their rich culture in pagan religions if I were to feel more cultural. I have been involved in some currents that lean heavily on traditions such as Vodou and Quimbanda and it would be rewarding to seek out those roots for myself one day.

Regardless of my own constant obsessions to achieve as many of the crazy dreams I have in my head in the small time that I have, many of these "dreams" have required huge amounts of traveling long distance and long term commitments. This usually has been on a very low budget with not much more than a backpack and often there has not been anything on "solid ground" to go back to. This is in a sense a handicap toward my quite lustful obsession for the electric guitar, which is not a very "portable" thing (though the traveling obsession predates the guitar obsession). How does this "situation" seep into your own "plans" and how do you imagine mitigating a balance point between traveling and such a love for music which simply must be plugged in?

To be perfectly honest, music has always won out over any, any(!!!) other consideration one might think of. I have left women because of it, they have left me because of it, I have wanted to leave my home and city behind for years but the guitar, or rather, the spirit that moves my hands upon, it is so unforgiving and all demanding that I seem to have resigned to my fate as a slave to that particular grind. Really, this sounds like a lament, I realise that, but in reality I am very glad that I at least have a means of expressing that is, to me, so urgent that there is way to ignore it. It is good to feel of use I guess and I have sacrificed much for the benefit of this, His, principle. I guess my dreams and asperations have always revolved around music. I feel this might change in the future but I have no idea how.

My answer for quite some time has been to bite the bullet and take an acoustic, but the more I've played electrified music, the harder this has gotten. The more important playing electric guitar has become, the more serious I've taken the logistics of making sure that there is always a place to store gear, which requires extra money and/or favors, and leans more and more towards giving up 90% of the traveling that I used to do on a regular basis. If you were to go somewhere which simply couldn't accommodate an electric guitar set-up, or to simply be on the move for a year or 30, could an acoustic really "feed the fire" adequately for someone whose mind is obviously as drenched in music as your self on a long term basis?

Electric, acoustic, these are just aesthetics they do not in fact change the power of the output even though it moulds its shape. I guess you have to make the best of what you've got. There's something to be said for doing one thing right.

Something to consider perhaps while pondering this is that I don't think of this as much of a "barrier breaking" process, in the same sense as I would compared to breaking a drug addiction or a romantic relationship which might have addictive tendencies... Perhaps the acoustic EP "66:2" will answer this in time without you saying anything?

I'm unsure, in the scope of Art I see myself as a spiritual artist first, producer and writer second and thirdly a guitarist. The platform on which I express myself may never become more important than the expression.

What are some of the similarities/parallels, as well as key differences, which (if) you are able to see, between anti-cosmic philosophies and aghori ideas, both left handed paths...?

I doubt I am the one to lecture you on this as I am initiated in neither tradition. Certainly not to the point of being able to teach. There is a trend going with people even younger than me who speak with self acclaimed authority on these matters and it sickens me. It is, like many other scenes and trends, a good way to earn respect from peers who haven't a clue either. Apart from the seclusionist tendencies in both currents and the veneration of disturbance and friction as way to become free from restriction moral

dogmas there isn't much of value I can share on this subject.

How do you imagine you might have ended up channeling the certain things which have been channeled with playing music, particularly with Devil's Blood, if you had never started playing music in the first place? In other words, what are some other creative outlets (tools) which perhaps could have handled the same things (religious/spiritual or not) which music (obviously one of your chosen tools) has been able to do for you?

I don't imagine such things. I believe such flights of fancy are a complete waste of time to be honest with you. Your words imply that I had a choice to do either what it is I'm doing or, with different tools, something completely different. I do not believe that for a minute. I am what I am and there is no way to change that. I believe in the nature of the beast not in the empty leaf, at least not in the sense we are talking here.

And of course, the question that all the others will ask, why did Devil's Blood end (if you're willing to talk about that stuff), and is it done for good, or is it all still in a "remains to be seen" state?

We ended because it was done. Done things do not start again. I fucking hate reunions, refuse to take part in such thing and don't see such concerts when they roll around. A band is much zeitgeist and age as it is music or ideology. To return to such things at a later date in a futile attempt to rekindle that particular flame are, by definition, impossible. You cannot be what you once were, you can only be what you are.

A guy by the name of Vimalananda once said something along the lines of, "no stringed/fretted instrument can ever come close to the amount of beauty which the human voice is capable of." I do not agree with this, being that I find most human voices to be annoying and ugly in comparison to certain things I've heard come from stringed/fretted instruments, but, I recognize that I may have had very different experiences with the human voice than he may have had. What are your thoughts on these ideas.....?

I definitely feel that vocals are extremely important, as are lyrics, I like the vocals big and loud and front and center with the drums and bass, then comes the guitar. It may sound strange coming from a guitarist but guitars should always be submissive to the vocals. I love a cappella music but I also love instrumental stuff. There is a time and place for every instrument to be touched and to touch. I do, however, agree with what I think his point was, at least the point I take from it, which is that the human body and the voice in particular are the most directly linked to the soul and therefore to the art. Everyone who has hands or feet can create rhythm and each one with a voice can sing or shout or rap or whatever the fuck they want to. There is no need for study, lesson or the application of reason in whatever form. There is unity in that which is lost when a man-made instrument, which ever kind, is used.

I find that when MOST people speak of astrology, it tends to be in a spiritual perspective. Although I consider the positions of the sun, moon and planets to have a very relevant part in how the tides shift, animal behavior, etc; I do not consider this to be a spiritual matter. I believe it is simply scientific reality. Ask any bar tender or police dispatcher if things tend to get a bit crazier during a full moon... not to mention the undeniable fact that usually when the moon is full-ish, it feels like there is a jack hammer inside my own head. "It is when the pendulum can swing the furthest, regardless of which direction it may swing," as one might say. In the last Watain interview I did, Erik and I talked about this stuff for a bit, and a

very interesting thing he said was that the difference between the way a wiccan priest might study these things and the way he might is that the wiccan priest would do so to operate within them. He (Erik) does so to break free of them. I can relate to this 2nd way of thinking very much, being that I find it quite annoying knowing that next time it is a full moon or next time Saturn is in some fucked up position, I have to know that I may very well have a nervous breakdown which could potentially lead in all sorts of directions. This is something I would eventually like to be totally free of and in saying that, I am not saying that "chaos is bad," being that such situations can often be quite chaotic, but that I view these things and times more as speed bumps than anything else. It is also fully acknowledging that there are occasions and positions which are likely to encourage more "productive and positive chaos." However, I would prefer to feel and do whatever the fuck I want, whenever I want, as opposed to waiting and/or dreading something to line up and in a sense, no matter how many grains of salt one may try to take it all with, being ruled by that things. Who the fuck has time for that? Being a mammal that is affected by gravity, like everyone else, I don't know if breaking free of these things will ever happen while I'm alive. All the same, I still consider this stuff to be cold hard science and thus do not look at it as "spiritual." Though I know the answer could take up several books, what do you have to say about all of this and where do you stand in the spiritual vs science realms when it comes to astrology?

I try to ignore the "vs" part and allow the one to follow from the other.

This question may not be part of the interview, but, when you played Quebec City last May (I had only heard the two full length albums at the time), there was a song which took up a good chunk of the middle of the set which I'm pretty sure was an extended version of "Heavens..." (it was not "River of Gold" or "Waxing Moon..." and definitely not "Voodoo Dust") I've found three different live/extended versions of "Heavens..." on youtube: one with the direct cover of "Four Horsemen" in the middle, another much more original jam session in the middle, the 3rd being something loosely based on "Four Horsemen," but not a direct cover. This makes me lean toward it having been a 4th version of "Heavens..." and on the idea that the song may have been different most times it was ever played live (as opposed to "Christ or Cocaine," which seems to have been pretty consistent for the most part, at least from 2010 and on)... ? BUT, one very specific thing I remember about this middle part was a bass line in the middle which was quite "River of Gold-ish" or "LA Woman-ish," and there were no drums, a bit like the middle of "Dazed and Confused," with little bits of guitar noodling in that "Santana-fied-Devil's Blood" way, or kinda like the interlude in "Stand for the Fire Demon," where everything slows down and sort of "simmers." After a bit of which the drums came in, again much like they do in "Dazed and Confused," things got faster and faster.... This version of whatever it was, has been gnawing at me every single day since last May. So if anyone knows or remembers what the hell it was, I guess it'd be you?????? (the fucking internet definitely doesn't seem to know)

We always used the middle part of that song as a starting point for improv and we've done that for at least half our sets over the years, so to be honest there is no way to tell what was done where. I'd usually nod to one of the bandmembers to let them know it was up to them to lead us into uncharted waters, so to speak. We've had some of our finest and most horrendous moments in that song. It is one of those songs I feel particularly grateful for as it offered all of us so many opportunities to reach the center of the Truth.

